

Comment and Feedback

Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia

In order to finalize the *Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia*, the drafters circulated more than 500 copies of the strategy and invited community stakeholders to provide opinion and comment. Fifty-eight persons provided written feedback. Their input is summarized below.

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	No Opinion	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	No Response
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Pre-Release Planning

This plan provides an effective, long-range strategy for creating an effective continuum of reentry services for DC offenders during incarceration, transition from incarceration to the community, and life in the community during and after supervision.	67% 39 of 58	21% 12 of 58	2% 1 of 58	3% 2 of 58	2% 1 of 58	5% 3 of 58
Assessment of offenders' reentry needs, which is the basis of plans for successful integration, should begin during incarceration and be updated at regular intervals after release from prison.	88% 51 of 58	10% 6 of 58	0% 0 of 58	0% 0 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58

Housing

Affordable, safe housing options for returning offenders are at a shortage in the District of Columbia.	72% 42 of 58	16% 9 of 58	9% 5 of 58	0% 0 of 58	3% 2 of 58	0% 0 of 58
Releasing offenders directly from prison to the street without a structured transition period in which the offender can focus on finding work and reestablishing community ties presents a risk to public safety.	79% 46 of 58	12% 7 of 58	2% 1 of 58	5% 3 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58

Education and Employment

Offenders receive adequate preparation for employment and opportunities for enhancing educational skills during incarceration.	36% 21 of 58	7% 4 of 58	5% 3 of 58	17% 10 of 58	34% 20 of 58	0% 0 of 58
District government agencies have a responsibility to provide educational enhancement, job training, and job placement services for returning offenders.	62% 36 of 58	24% 14 of 58	3% 2 of 58	5% 3 of 58	5% 3 of 58	0% 0 of 58
Community-based organizations need to provide additional educational, job training, and job placement services for returning offenders in the District of Columbia.	60% 35 of 58	28% 16 of 58	2% 1 of 58	5% 3 of 58	5% 3 of 58	0% 0 of 58

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	No Opinion	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	No Response
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Substance Abuse Treatment

The establishment of a Reentry and Sanctions Center to screen and assess newly released offenders with extensive criminal and substance abuse histories will help decrease the number of reentrants who return to incarceration for new criminal offenses or violations of release conditions.	64% 37 of 58	19% 11 of 58	5% 3 of 58	7% 4 of 58	2% 1 of 58	3% 2 of 58
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Mental Health Treatment

Correctional and public health agencies need to collaborate to ensure that all returning offenders receive appropriate mental health screening and referrals for placement in appropriate services upon release, if needed.	93% 54 of 58	5% 3 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58	0% 0 of 58	0% 0 of 58
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Identification and Benefits

Offenders returning to the community need valid identification at the time of release or shortly after in order to search for and obtain employment and to obtain benefits for which he or she may be eligible.	95% 55 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58	2% 1 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58
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Family and Community Support

Returning offenders would benefit from participating in support groups that include ex-offenders who have established productive, law-abiding lives after their release from incarceration.	88% 51 of 58	9% 5 of 58	3% 2 of 58	0% 0 of 58	0% 0 of 58	0% 0 of 58
Faith-based support services and mentoring are potentially effective approaches to assisting offenders to break criminal behavior patterns.	64% 37 of 58	22% 13 of 58	2% 1 of 58	9% 5 of 58	2% 1 of 58	2% 1 of 58
Inmates who maintain contact with family members or individuals who can provide positive social support during incarceration are more successful during reentry than those without positive contact.	64% 37 of 58	24% 14 of 58	9% 5 of 58	2% 1 of 58	2% 1 of 58	0% 0 of 58

Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	No Opinion	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly	No Response
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Public Education

Most residents are aware of the substance abuse, social networking, education, employment, and family needs that returning offenders need to address in order to successfully reintegrate into the community.	12% 7 of 58	21% 12 of 58	3% 2 of 58	38% 22 of 58	24% 14 of 58	2% 1 of 58
Public safety will improve if returning offenders have ample opportunity to meet their individual needs in a timely and comprehensive fashion.	62% 36 of 58	22% 13 of 58	3% 2 of 58	7% 4 of 58	3% 2 of 58	2% 1 of 58

Quality Assurance

Correctional and community correctional agencies need to maintain an effective quality review process to ensure that program providers meet and exceed professional standards and offer effective services.	76% 45 of 58	14% 8 of 58	2% 1 of 58	2% 1 of 58	3% 2 of 58	2% 1 of 58
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Policy and Legislative Issues

Issues related to child support, increased substance abuse treatment resources, and the provision of adequate housing options for returning offenders require legal and or policy change.	66% 38 of 58	14% 8 of 58	9% 5 of 58	5% 3 of 58	3% 2 of 58	3% 2 of 58
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Written Comments Received

Additional written comments are listed verbatim.

What is needed is a series of group sessions run by ex-offenders and supervised by CSOSA Staff. These successful Ex-Offender can assist with the Re-Entry process an assessment should be made after a pilot project to determine the work of such an experiment.

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I'd like to express enthusiastic support for the proposals above + especially encourage the components that are gender - specific for female inmates.

Money for these services could be obtained by making more use of drug and crime courts with treatment.

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-Need more of a 'family centered model' here - lots of struggle/resentment on family with

reentry.

-Transportation missing in assessment.

-Big gaps in specialized services for geriatrics, disabled, immigrants, & parenting

-Absurd to propose wages be set aside for release, \$\$ either goes to care while incarcerated or support to families = there is no extra \$\$.
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I strongly feel if there is no loitering order in effect, my community would not welcome these people. I don't feel that they will receive adequate monitoring and supervision.
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The community needs sensitivity training. A lot of people are very hostile toward offenders. The Churches, for the most part, are uncaring and "holier than thou". They especially need the sensitivity training. Most offenders are pretty savvy services available. They just don't want to be shunned.
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Some type of body fitness program needed.
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Reentry appears adequate as indicated.
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This draft proposed sounds like it would require a great deal of new taxpayer dollars. Taxpayers are already paying for incarceration. Now you are proposing taxpayers for the re-entry as well. Churches should be able to support some of have proposed without it costing taxpayers more money-no more government grants. We can't adequately house law-abiding citizens in D.C. Why should we put persons serving time for criminal acts on a housing waiting list in anticipation of
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1) The attention is given to orientation of the spouse or significant other. They need to be aware of what is required and how each can assist. 2) Suggest some money management training. 3) Some training should be provided to address how contribute to his/or her community. 4) Emphasize no hanging out on concerns with people who may use them to promote their efforts to do nothing but engage in pursuits that would not be beneficial.

Housing-Structured Environment but Not an abusive one. Education- Improvement in education should be Mandatory. Especially knowing that they can be the best employee because of their experiences. Mental Health- With some concern we need to be very cautious.

Identification-Be sure it's the same as the general public, Give them amnesty so they can get a Driver's License. Family and community- they need to be include in a wider
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A large number of returning offenders have lost contact with relatives, due to their long period of incarceration. Also, some family members have lost faith with the offender and no longer want to be associated with the offender.

What about the many offenders that are or have HIV/AIDS?

Re-entry Strategies must be determined primarily based on the incarceration environment and most recent time and experiences acquired during incarceration. Related discuss are needed.

As the President of our Housing Establishment I find that the Critical points of this survey fall on Substance abuse, community support as most are from broken families. I am seen at times as a father figure. Job training and housing are also critical.

There should be guidelines considered in the reentry strategy for the needs of females in view of the length of time incarcerated without any skills with only GED who want further education to enhance higher career goals.

Mental Health Treatment it could take more money community based organization which would come into extra money. Inmates who maintain positive contact with family sometimes it doesn't happen like that. Most res. Are not community. Public safety might work. Let's hope that quality assurance will work.

Policy and legislative issues -- I don't know what these policies are.

Thank you C.S.O.S.A !

- 1) Overall, this is a good attempt at bringing together person within the communities, federal, local government and private industry. However, were those most affected allowed to comment on this plan, especially since it is their lives will
- 2) What is the role of the MPD? They need to be on the bandwagon and not causing hardships on recently released offenders.
- 3) I'm really interested in domestic violence cases and how they are handled and considered from a pre-sentencing report, during incarceration and once a release date has arrived. Who has final say?

Perhaps if closer monitoring by Probation officers of the offenders release conditions and requirements could deter some of the repeated crimes before they escalate.

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I believe that ex-offenders should NOT be reintegrated into the negative environment from which he/she was initially incarcerated. Preferably, a new positive venue should be established, even in another state, if possible.

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The clothing is an issue, letting them come home with no clothing. No monies is a great issue especially the ones who have no family support or ties.

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Education and job training should be mandatory for all offenders who plan to leave w/I 2-5 years of release. Since we are paying for their stay in jail, they should be getting prepared to go to the community. Why wait for them to get out so we again??

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There needs to be a unified attack on this problem - if the Government and churches could work together, government for body, churches for spirit/soul, then the whole person could be ministered too, instead of only partial or divided treatment.

For only in the Constitution is there a separation of Church and State, but in God's Kingdom, all belongs to Him, the Government was all His idea.

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I've circled some questions because a good survey requires that you address every issue, but a lot of residents talk and act a good game while incarcerated but when they're released, they revert to their old ways over and over again. I'm sick of it.

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The author suggests that their organization, Regional Addiction Prevention, should be the primary conduit for all reentry initiatives in the District because CSOSA's Plan isn't aggressive enough, nor does it outline a workable action plan.

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Rap, Inc. has provided substance abuse treatment in the District of Columbia since 1970. Our 32-year history has afforded us the opportunity to meet the ever-increasing challenges of providing treatment service for a variety of clients (including adolescents, adults, women with children, criminal justice system involved clients, dually diagnosed clients as well as clients managing chronic mental illness along with addiction to drugs) in the context of growing demand and dwindling resources. The experience has also provided us with the expertise to assess client need and to evaluate strategies aimed at addressing those needs.

The proposed Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia (CRSA) generated by the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) is a detailed and strategic beginning of the process of implementing reentry formulas that both increases the safety of the public as well as provides the essential services necessary to improving the chances of successful transition to pro-social independent living for offenders returning to our communities. However, it is our belief that CRSA lacks the degree of assertiveness required to insure provision of the services it outlines for effecting seamless delivery of quality supervision and support to reentrants.

Actuarial advances and availability of statistical data allows for the identification of the specific level of services and needs of reentrants. We are now at the juncture where we can quantify abuse treatment, psychological support, housing, educational and vocational needs of the finite number of offenders poised to return to the community. We find that CRSA stops short of developing action steps for the establishment of the specific numbers of residents, the agency currently responsible for addressing particular aspects of the reentrants needs and the dollar amounts that must be available to meet this challenge. Because of our tendency to compartmentalize approaches to supervision and support, we conclude that the CRSA stops short of recommending that reentrant support be channeled through CSOSA and that the funding necessary for the provision of that support be allocated to this central agency. For example, we can estimate the mental needs of reentrants and the costs associated with service delivery and, based on those estimates, the CRSA should include language that allows for that specific level of funding be transferred to CSOSA for that purpose. This same process should be applied to the educational, housing vocational support and other needs comprehensively explored and identified in the CRSA.

Compartmentalization could diminish the clinical utility of the CRSA. The CRSA confirms that 70% of returning offenders have a history of substance abuse. The CRSA also confirms that offenders who are afforded substance abuse treatment-both during and after incarceration-have a better prognosis for right living. Again the CSRA stops of mandating clinical interventions to address substance abuse issues at every juncture of the reentry continuum.

Substance abuse exacerbates the already devastating combination of criminal thinking, criminal behavior and criminal associations. Therefore, substance abuse treatment must incorporate values and role clarification into the treatment process. Modification of the reentrants view of the self and of their world, in addition to abstinence and adequate support are the main ingredients of the early recovery process. Clarified values and character building provide the basis for changes in decision-making. Family, freedom, health, honesty, integrity, resilience, fortitude, etc. are values and character traits that empower the offender to make better choices. Offenders reentering the community must be acquainted and/or reacquainted with their roles (i.e. father, mother, husband, wife neighbor, elder, etc.) They must be introduced and/or reintroduced to new responsibilities and provided with a structured setting in which to build and practice the skills they need for the clarified roles. This experience can only be provided in settings that are structured

and philosophically predisposed to providing these types of reconstructive and facilitative experiences for the offender.

While we strongly agree with the CRSA emphasis on the critical need to insure public safety, CRSA should mandate the level of treatment and support that must occur at all levels of the reentry continuum if the reentrant is to receive the treatment that mitigates criminal thinking, substance abuse and negative associations. This level of clinical and psychological support is necessary pre-release and at subsequent levels of reentry process.

We applaud the CSOSA CRSA effort and stand ready to lend our support as a treatment provider in any way we can assist in implementing the enhancers suggested above.

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Congratulations on completing the draft of the *Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia*. I know that you have worked long and hard to see this project come fruition and we appreciate all of your efforts to improve the conditions of re-entry for District of Columbia women and men who been incarcerated in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the DC Jail, and the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF).

Enclosed is our Comment and Feedback Form. In addition, we would like to offer the following comments and recommendations, which we believe will enhance the final draft and effectiveness of the plan.

Summary Recommendations

Pre-Release Planning and Case Management

- Add **identification** to bullet three “Develop short-term re-entry packages...”
- Add **medical including HIV/AIDS services** to bullet four “Complete referrals for access to...”

Housing

- Add **apply for Section 8 Housing** while incarcerated as a fifth bullet

Educating and Employment

- Strengthen this section by adding **and complete GED** after receive education
- Add the Workforce Organizations for Regional Collaboration (WORC) to bullet 2

- Add a new bullet that reads **Improve the transfer of education records from the District of Columbia Department of Education to the Education Department in BOP facilities** (Currently it is extremely difficult for institutions to get these records and they require them to place prisoners in appropriate education and training programs).

Family & Community Support

- Add a new bullet that reads **Work with community and faith-based organizations to increase the number of family transportation programs to BOP facilities where DC residents are incarcerated.**

Phase I. Institutionally Based Programs

1. Add to the Reentry team **representatives from community-based organizations that are working with men and women in BOP facilities, the DC Jail, and the Correctional Treatment Facility.**
2. A report of the D.C. Jobs Council published in June 2001 found the One Stop Career Centers in the District to be fairly ineffective. You might want to alter this recommendation since we don't want to be sending people to places that aren't really prepared to assist them.
3. Add **Health and HIV/AIDS services** to the list of critical areas
4. It is unclear what is meant by the sentence "Since the majority of women in the criminal justice system are mothers..." This sentence makes two distinct points; the first is that women face additional burdens because they are concerned about the children and the second is that many women in prison have dual substances abuse and mental health programs.

An alternative might be... **Many women in the criminal justice system have both addiction and mental health problems. The majority of women in the criminal justice system are mothers. Concerns about the safety and welfare of their children place additional burdens on them while they are incarcerated.**

I-D Substance Abuse

In general, the central role of substance abuse problems and treatment need far more focus and discussion. A comprehensive system of high quality community and institution

based substances abuse treatment and continuing care is needed to really make a difference in successful re-entry. **In general, substance abuse problems and treatment need to be elevated in this report.**

A plan is only as good as the implementation that follows it. It will be very important for CSOSA to develop an implementation plan to accompany the final *Comprehensive Re-entry Strategy for Adults in The District Of Columbia*. The implementation plan must include a work plan with goals, objectives, and measurable deliverables. In addition, it will be important to establish a formal mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the plan. Then, we will have a concrete way to measure our progress.

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Per your request , I am putting my comments in writing with respect to the draft comments in writing with respect to the draft comprehensive reentry strategy. What I'd like to do is paint some broad brush strokes which I will glad to discuss with you any time.

1. The report lacks a comprehensive and precise definition of “re-entry.” “Re-entry” implies a combination of responsibilities: the offender, the institution, the family, the police, the neighborhood, government entities, small non-profits etc. These roles should be clearly and specifically defined. Once this is done, the blue print for re-entry becomes clearer. (For example, if we expect to inmate to be ready for when he's released, then we need to make sure he has the proper ID when he walks out the door – this, then, goes back to the releasing institution to make sure that the inmate has proper ID before he/she is released.)
2. Rather than explanations throughout the report as to how people are released, some sort of flow chart would be better – that is, sentenced felons are sent to the Bureau of Prisons and released from there. Misdemeanants are, for the most part, released from there. Misdemeanants are, for the most part, released from the Jail, The report is not clear. The report should be very specific as to your involvement or lack of involvement with the pretrial population.....since that population on a daily basis is at least twice as large as the annual number of returning prisoners.
3. The report is totally devoid of numbers of releasees..a simple table would help. And I would do this on a monthly basis. How many inmates were released from federal facilities? How many from DC facilities since the beginning of the year...
4. The reports gives a very one-dimensional view of inmates: that they are violent, drug addicted, jobless – and they need a ton of support. Inmates are very easily labeled and this report continues this labeling. The report goes on to say that 100% of inmates should go through halfway houses: do you really mean that?

What I am getting at is that your report offers no net through which so many returning inmates can flow – There are many inmates who return to jobs, stable

homes etc. Do they have to go through halfway houses? Certainly some of this population can avoid a halfway house – but there is no suggestion of this in your report. Everyone is just the same.....

5. The report expects too much from the wider community to “understand” this problem. Community “understanding” is a moving target and so elusive. Is there really any reason for them to understand what revitalization etc means – and all this division of responsibility?
6. Ex-offenders need to be “inspirational” to inmates – not the overall community. Let them go into the jails and talk about how to make it, how hard it is etc.
7. The report makes almost no mention of the literally thousands of organizations and non-profits in the DC area which can help released offenders and this is really too bad. It is through these organizations that inmates get support – and the community feels the support. Beyond the institution, the community organizations are the second line of defense – and there is almost nothing made of this. This is perhaps the biggest failure of this report..
8. The report does not make ex-offenders a part of a community that we all share – they seem to be exceptions. For example, there are suggestions that employers should be made more aware of the needs of ex-offenders, get tax credits etc – this is so unrealistic in days of high unemployment. There are also unrealistic suggestions in the report of other exceptions – section 8 housing, relaxing zoning laws etc.
9. The report leaves me with the impression that CSOSA wants to do everything – and can do everything: train employers, lawyers, and judges, reinvent the wheel as far as programs go etc. Is this really the impression you want to convey?
10. Your comment form is self-serving. It would be better, it seems to me, for CSOSA to have monthly meetings of the small organizations serving the offender population – where we could exchange information, gather more resources from one another, learn about funding opportunities etc. Having a focal point to gather and send information would be so helpful to the many of us who just do this on our own.

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Post-Release:

What system is in place for evaluation, documenting and tracking the services provided and the outcomes of the various programs proposal?

For ex-offenders discharged to housing facilities in the community, who is responsible for monitoring these facilities, behavior compliance, and up keep of the property? Is a system in place for community involvement? For example a church I know devoted items (clothing, linens, household goods) on a yearly basis to a specified halfway house for men. Is this the type of activity for other churches? How are the Civic Associations being informed and involved in the re-entry process?

Other comments:

In my opinion, the Comprehensive Reentry Strategies shows a great deal of thought and planning.

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[Below is the text of a letter from Kathy Patterson, Chair, Committee on the Judiciary, Council of the District of Columbia, to Paul A. Quander, Jr., June 9, 2003].

Dear Mr. Quander:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft of the *Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia* and I look forward to the discussion on these issues on June 12, 2003. I would like to offer some general comments and questions on the proposal, and some specific questions based on the recommendations.

While the strategy is presented as a detailed plan for an effective continuum of reentry services for D.C. offenders during incarceration, transition, and life in the community, I respectfully suggest that the draft should be viewed as a well-written concept paper of what an ideal reentry strategy should include. Your staff has obviously reviewed the important literature in the field, and paid close attention to achieving a balance between supervision of and services for offenders. I commend this effort.

That said, the draft is not really a plan, *per se*. There is no connective tissue, so to speak, to hold the proposed initiative together. The draft does not, yet, include discussion about governance, infrastructure, accountability, or how this is going to be put into place – all critical elements to a plan. For example, who is in charge of this strategy? How will coordination really occur? What has been presented is very good, but remains conceptual. There are also suggestions that are today unrealistic, such as the proposal that the D.C. Department of Corrections create its own job readiness program when the agency has a series of challenging tasks before it already.

The discussion in the draft would be made more real by including information such as how many offenders are envisioned to be managed under this plan. Will this be a demonstration project? Will someone – CSOSA presumably -- just open the doors and accept everyone coming back from U.S. Bureau of Prison facilities? What is the relationship between this initiative encompassed in the strategy draft, and the one proposed in the grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice?

A timeline and well thought-through section on implementation should, perhaps, be the next step in this process. Because this draft itself was two years in production, I am hopeful that the next steps are taken with a greater sense of urgency.

My more specific questions follow:

Page 5: A 1997 MOU between BOP and the District of Columbia stipulated that prisoners from D.C. would be housed in federal facilities within a 500 mile radius of the District. Besides the 6,152 D.C. inmates being held in BOP facilities on the Eastern Seaboard, it sounds like more than 2,200 others are being held in 25 different states elsewhere. Does this mean BOP is out of compliance with the MOU, and if so, what's being done about this situation?

Page 6 (Pre-Release Planning and Case Management): What is the mechanism envisioned for data sharing between correctional and community correctional personnel and who is going to create and manage this?

Page 8 (Education and Employment): How will you encourage an increase in the number of offenders who receive educational programming during incarceration?

Page 9 (Education and Employment): There can be no disagreement with the goal of housing employment readiness programs at District facilities. But instead of requiring the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC) to develop an employment readiness program for sentenced misdemeanants and pretrial detainees, have you considered asking the D.C. Department of Employment Services to loan out Project Empowerment staff or to ask successful private sector programs like STRIVE to provide that service? What is the rationale behind suggesting that DOC get into the job-readiness business?

Page 10 (Substance Abuse): What is the plan for expanding drug treatment at the Jail when there are not enough treatment beds for non-prisoners in the District? How will the Jail deal with the lack of space needed to set up a well-run residential drug treatment program which should be run separately from the general population?

Page 11 (Family and Community Support): The recommendation to utilize relevant technology to maintain family relationships while inmates are still in prison is very important. But there is nothing specific stated here about what technology might be appropriate except the comment about the high cost of telephones. Since Internet usage in prisons is very controversial, how will you guarantee technology is used as a tool?

Page 14 (Transitional Planning and Case Management): Most of the section on transitional services relates to BOP and the Community Correctional Centers. How do you envision DOC's involvement in reentry issues? How do you envision the District government's role, generally, in reentry?

Page 14 (Education and Employment): Unless a lot of public education is done and a very long list of supportive employers is compiled, the requirement to find a job within 15 days may be unrealistic, especially in the current economy. What happens to an offender who does not fulfill this requirement? Are there sanctions?

Page 16 (Case Management): What is the status of CSOSA's proposed Reentry and Sanctions Center to be established at Karrick Hall?

Page 16-17 (Continuity of Services): Who will coordinate the collaboration on funding and technical assistance that is proposed between government agencies and community-based organization to develop a one-stop reentry service for non-supervised ex-offenders? This is obviously very appealing, but how to you anticipate it will be operationalized?

Finally, there are issues involved in successful reentry that may well include legislative action, and I welcome that part of the dialogue. Two such issues come to mind: child support arrearages and "sentence reduction benefits." Following a comprehensive and informative oversight hearing on child support enforcement in the District this past week, the Committee on the Judiciary is drafting a report with recommendations for improving the child support program. We are researching the approaches taken in California, North Carolina and elsewhere that have reduced child support arrearages, including the ability for a program to reduce the amount someone who is incarcerated would otherwise owe once released. I welcome discussion on this issue.

Similarly, I am interested in considering "sentence reduction benefits" for completion of a residential drug treatment program for D.C. Code offenders as is now available to those convicted of violating U.S. Code provisions. There may well be other issues that have not yet been articulated in the reentry conversation that will also require legislation by the D.C. Council and I welcome that discussion.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the draft, and I look forward to the discussion on June 12.

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Basically, I have agreed with all of the suggested strategies considered in assisting reentrants in re-acclimating (or acclimating) themselves to the dynamics of a free, but competing society – in a world of change, in which all is transitory, ephemeral, etc. However, I do have some personal comments to offer in support of everyone's collective EFFORTS to network in receiving offenders being released from institutions/prisons.

The basic and fundamental approach to, perhaps, perfecting these goals should begin prior to the release and during the offender's preparatory release stages.

Specifically, the offenders should be required to go through a process of **De-institutionalization** (hereinafter referred to as **De-institutionalization/Debriefing**). This particular, unique modality would address a certain class of individuals that have a

history of long and frequent periods of incarcerations. The mission, or goal, is to **De-institutionalization/Debrief** (them) from a preoccupied mental, social and psychological indoctrination of prison culture. This process is first and foremost if these individuals are, realistically, expected to embrace and appreciate the “golden” opportunities that await their arrivals. Because, over the years, in case of recidivism, these offenders’ intellectual and cognitive capabilities have been reduced to that of animalistic propensities.

From strictly a therapeutic perspective/process, the offenders should be able to identify, to name a few, some of the issues that have in the past negatively impacted his/her ability to conform and function in the community:

- **Institutionalization Personality**
- **Antisocial Personality**
- **Social Sensory Deprivation**
- **Beliefs and Values**
- **Anger Management**
- **Self-esteem**
- **Positive Perceptions**
- **Life Skills**
- **Peer Pressure (from successful & productive ex-offenders)**
- **Family Interventions (significant others)**
- **Unresolved Grievous/Issues Group**

It is common, conventional knowledge (and wisdom) that incarceration Stunts Human Growth and Development.

As an offender and a current **Certified Addiction Counselor at RAP, Inc.**, there’s such a **De-institutionalization modality** used in the treatment process of, mainly, clients coming out the penal system. This method, approached from a therapeutic perspective, has proved to be both realistic and significantly effective.

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The Ex-offender Reintegration Coalition of DC (ERC/DC) publicly endorses the Comprehensive Reentry Strategy for Adults in the District of Columbia. We feel it is a powerful document and will go a long way towards moving reentry efforts forward in The District of Columbia. We thank the many organizations and individuals that have contributed to getting the process to this point. We understand that some of the recommendations in the plan are already being implemented by CSOSA, but there are many more to be implemented by a variety of agencies and non-governmental organizations in order for the Strategy to be as affective as possible. To ensure that the Mayor's office not only accept the Strategy plan, but actually begins the process of implementation, the ERC would like to formally set up a committee to help oversee the efforts. The ERC is committed to furthering the goals set forth in the Reentry Strategy through our member organizations and as a coalition.